



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## **Hearing Set for Small Business Owners to Comment About Excessive Federal Regulatory Enforcement**

### ***Iowa ICN Locations Allow for Maximum Small Business Participation***

**DES MOINES, Iowa** – Small business owners in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska with concerns about excessive enforcement of federal rules will have a chance to voice their complaints at a U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Hearing June 16. The hearing will be conducted from 1:30 – 5 p.m. in Cedar Rapids by SBA National Ombudsman Michael Barrera who will be connected to twelve cities via the Iowa Communications Network.

Barrera conducts regional hearings and meetings around the country for business owners to discuss openly, without fear of retaliation, their concerns about federal regulatory compliance practices. The hearing in SBA's Region VII has the capacity of being one of the largest held in the country with the help of Iowa's interactive fiber-optic network system and it will be the first offering interactive teleconference site participation ever conducted in Iowa.

"The availability of the ICN provides our office, and the small business owners throughout Iowa and neighboring states, a remarkable opportunity to address the problems of excessive or unfair enforcement of federal regulations," Barrera said. "Small business owners want to play by the rules and comply with federal regulations," he said, "and we want to encourage federal regulators to assist business owners with compliance rather than go straight to the penalty stage."

Ombudsman Barrera's office works closely with more than 35 federal regulatory agencies to resolve complaints about excessive enforcement of federal regulations. "We take the information from these hearings back to Washington D.C. and work directly federal agencies to encourage a less punitive and more small-business friendly regulatory environment," Barrera said.

Congress created the Office of the National Ombudsman through the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. The act also established 10 regional fairness boards, served by 50 small business owners from across the country. Paul Kinyon, president of Realty Advisors from Cedar Rapids, Iowa is chairman of the board in Region VII.

Barrera will conduct the hearing from Cedar Rapids at the University of Iowa, 221 Town Centre, 3rd Ave. SE, Room 221. He will be joined there by Kinyon and Cedar Rapids SBA District Director Jim Thomson. In Des Moines, SBA District Director John Langin will host the site.

Current and past regulatory fairness board members will also attend or host various sites, including James Ziebarth and past board member Dan Morgan, Nebraska members; Clark Stewart, Kansas member; Jeanette Prenger, Missouri member; and former Iowa board member Joanne Stockdale.

**-more-**

## **No. 03 05 01, Page 2/Regulatory Fairness Hearing**

Representatives from the Iowa Small Business Development Center, SBA's counseling and training partner in Iowa, will host hearing participants at these ICN sites:

- Des Moines - State Library - Old Babcock Miller Bldg., East 12th & Grand Ave., Rooms 2 and 3 - Hosts: Langin and Sherry Shafer; SBDC Director;
- Davenport - Eastern Iowa Community College - 326 West 3rd Street, Kahl Educational Center, Room 304; Host: Joan Calvin, SBDC Director;
- West Burlington -Southeastern Community College-1500 West Agency Rd. - North Campus/Trustee Hall, Room 503 - Host: Janine Clover, SBDC Director;
- Dubuque - Keystone Area Education Agency - 2310 Chaney Road – Room 2 - Host: Terry Sullivan, SBDC Director;
- Sioux City - Western Iowa Tech Community College, 4647 Stone Ave., Building B, Room127B - Host: Jackie Nohr, SBDC Director;
- Spencer – Spencer Public Library, 21 East Third Street - Host: Kelly McCarty, SBDC Director;
- Fort Dodge - Fort Dodge Public Library, 424 Central Avenue - Host: Lisa Schorzmman, SBDC Director;
- Mason City - North Iowa Area Community College, 500 College Drive, Careers Bldg., Room 128 - Host: Richard Petersen, SBDC director;
- Council Bluffs - Council Bluffs Public Library, 400 Willow Ave. Host: Omaha District SBA staff;
- Ottumwa - Indian Hills Community College, 651 Indian Hills Drive – Host: Bryan Ziegler, SBDC Director;
- Creston - Southwestern Community College, 1501 West Townline Road, Instructional Center, Room 207 – Host: Bill Taylor, SBDC Director.

Information gathered from the hearing will be included in the ombudsman's annual report to Congress. The report includes findings and recommendations about the regulatory enforcement environment and its effect on small business. Each federal regulatory agency is also rated in the report based upon their responsiveness to small business comments.

The national ombudsman's authority to respond to comments on compliance issues is limited to federal regulatory enforcement matters and does not include concerns about obtaining federal contracts, regulations in general, or securing guaranteed loans. Unfair compliance practices, excessive fines and audits, or burdensome enforcement of federal regulations have been discussed at previous hearings.

The hearing is open to the public; however those wishing to participate must contact the SBA in Cedar Rapids at (319) 362-6405 prior to the hearing. Should a small business owner or representative be unable to attend, written testimony may be sent in advance of the hearing to be included in the public record.

For additional information about the national ombudsman and this hearing, you may wish to visit the National Ombudsman's Web site at [www.sba.gov/ombudsman](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman).

***Editor's Note: Ombudsman Michael Barrera and attending regional board members for Regulatory Fairness will be available at 4:30 p.m. for press interviews by teleconference from the various interactive teleconference sites. Please call Keith McBride, Cedar Rapids SBA District Office Public Information Officer, at (319) 362-6405 to confirm participation.***

*For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640, or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at [<http://www.sba.gov>](http://www.sba.gov). SBA, in partnership with Staples, has introduced a new online Newsletter **SBA Solutions**. For a free subscription, go to [<http://web.sba.gov/list>](http://web.sba.gov/list), and select New **SBA Solutions Newsletter**.*